NUMB. XXXV.

The SPECTATOR.

Riſu inepto res ineptior nulla eſt. Mart.

Tueſday, April 10. 1711.

AMONG all kinds of Writing, there is none in which Authors are more apt to miſcarry than in Works of Humour, as there is none in which they are more ambitious to excell. It is not an Imagination that teems with Monſters, an Head that is filled with extravagant Conceptions, which is capable of furniſhing the World with Diverſions of this nature; and yet if we look into the Productions of ſeveral Writers, who ſet up for Men of Humour, what wild irregular Fancies, what unnatural Diſtortions of Thought, do we meet with? If they ſpeak Nonſenſe, they believe they are talking Humour; and when they have drawn together a Scheme of abſurd, inconſiſtent Idea's, they are not able to read it over to themſelves without laughing. Theſe poor Gentlemen endeavour to gain themſelves the Reputation of Wits and Humouriſts, by ſuch monſtrous Conceits as almoſt qualify them for *Bedlam*; not conſidering that Humour ſhould always lye under the Check of Reaſon, and that it requires the Direction of the niceſt Judgment, by ſo much the more as it indulges it ſelf in the moſt boundleſs Freedoms. There is a kind of Nature that is to be obſerved in this ſort of Compoſitions, as well as in all other, and a certain Regularity of Thought that muſt diſcover the Writer to be a Man of Senſe, at the ſame time that he appears altogether given up to Caprice: For my part, when I read the delirious Mirth of an unskilful Author, I cannot be ſo barbarous as to divert my ſelf with it, but am rather apt to pity the Man, than to laugh at any thing he writes.

The Deceas'd Mr. *Shadwell*, who had himſelf a great deal of the Talent, which I am treating of, repreſents an empty Rake, in one of his Plays, as very much ſurprized to hear one ſay that breaking of Windows was not Humour; and I queſtion not but ſeveral *Engliſh* Readers will be as much ſtartled to hear me affirm, that many of thoſe raving incoherent Pieces, which are often ſpread among us, under odd Chymerical Titles, are rather the Offſprings of a Diſtempered Brain, than Works of Humour.

It is indeed much eaſier to deſcribe what is not Humour, than what is; and very difficult to define it otherwiſe than as *Cowley* has done Wit, by Negatives. Were I to give my own Notions of it, I would deliver them after *Plato*'s manner, in a kind of Allegory, and by ſuppoſing Humour to be a Perſon, deduce to him all his Qualifications, according to the following Genealogy. TRUTH was the Founder of the Family, and the Father of GOOD SENSE. GOOD SENSE was the Father of WIT, who married a Lady of a Collateral Line called MIRTH, by whom he had Iſſue HUMOUR. HUMOUR therefore being the youngeſt of this Illuſtrious Family, and deſcended from Parents of ſuch different Diſpoſitions, is very various and unequal in his Temper; ſometimes you ſee him putting on grave Looks and a ſolemn Habit, ſometimes airy in his Behaviour and fantaſtick in his Dreſs: Inſomuch that at different times he appears as ſerious as a Judge, and as jocular as a *Merry-Andrew*. But as he has a great deal of the Mother in his Conſtitution, whatever Mood he is in, he never fails to make his Company laugh.

But ſince there are ſeveral Impoſtors abroad, who take upon them the Name of this young Gentleman, and would willingly paſs for him in the World; to the end that well-meaning Perſons may not be impoſed upon by Counterfeits, I would deſire my Readers, when they meet with any of theſe Pretenders, to look into his Parentage, and to examine him ſtrictly, whether or no he be remotely allied to TRUTH, and lineally deſcended from GOOD SENSE? if not, they may conclude him a Counterfeit. They may likewiſe diſtinguiſh him by a loud and exceſſive Laughter, in which he ſeldom gets his Company to join with him. For as TRUE HUMOUR generally looks ſerious, whilſt every Body laughs that is about him

him; FALSE HUMOUR is always laughing, whilſt every Body about him looks ſerious. I ſhall only add, if he has not in him a Mixture of both Parents, that is, if he wou'd paſs for the Offspring of WIT without MIRTH, or MIRTH without WIT, you may conclude him to be altogether Spurious, and a Cheat.

The Impoſtor of whom I am ſpeaking, deſcends Originally from FALSEHOOD, who was the Mother of NONSENSE, who was brought to Bed of a Son called FRENZY, who Married one of the Daughters of FOLLY, commonly known by the Name of LAUGHTER, on whom he begot that Monſtrous Infant of which I have been here ſpeaking. I ſhall ſet down at length the Genealogical Table of FALSE HUMOUR, and, at the ſame time, place under it the Genealogy of TRUE HUMOUR, that the Reader may at one View behold their different Pedigrees and Relations.

FALSESHOOD.
NONSENSE.
FRENZY. — LAUGHTER.
FALSE HUMOUR.

TRUTH.
GOOD SENSE.
WIT. — MIRTH.
HUMOUR.

I might extend the Allegory, by mentioning ſeveral of the Children of FALSE HUMOUR, who are more in Number than the Sands of the Sea, and might in particular enumerate the many Sons and Daughters which he has begot in this Iſland. But as this would be a very invidious Task, I ſhall only obſerve in general, that FALSE HUMOUR differs from the TRUE, as a Monkey does from a Man.

Firſt of all, He is exceedingly given to little Apiſh Tricks and Buffooneries.

Secondly, He ſo much delights in Mimickry, that it is all one to him whether he expoſes by it Vice and Folly, Luxury and Avarice; or, on the contrary, Virtue and Wiſdom, Pain and Poverty.

Thirdly, He is wonderfully unlucky, inſomuch that he will bite the Hand that feeds him, and endeavour to ridicule both Friends and Foes indifferently. For having but ſmall Talents, he muſt be merry where he *can*, not where he *ſhould*.

Fourthly, Being intirely void of Reaſon, he purſues no Point either of Morality or Inſtruction, but is Ludicrous only for the ſake of being ſo.

Fifthly, Being incapable of any thing but Mock-Repreſentations, his Ridicule is always Perſonal, and aimed at the Vicious Man, or the Writer; not at the Vice, or at the Writing.

I have here only pointed at the whole Species of Falſe Humouriſts, but as one of my principal Deſigns in this Paper is to beat down that malignant Spirit, which diſcovers it ſelf in the Writings of the preſent Age, I ſhall not ſcruple, for the future, to ſingle out any of the ſmall Wits, that infeſt the World with ſuch Compoſitions as are ill-natured, immoral and abſurd. This is the only Exception which I ſhall make to the General Rule I have preſcribed my ſelf, of *attacking Multitudes*. Since every honeſt Man ought to look upon himſelf as in a Natural State of War with the Libeller and Lampooner, and to annoy them where-ever they fall in his way, this is but retaliating upon them and treating them as they treat others.

Compleat Setts of this Paper, for the Month of March, are to be ſold by Mr. Graves in St. James's Street; Mr. Lillie, Perfumer, the Corner of Beaufort-Buildings; Mr. Sanger at the Temple Gate, Mr. Knapton in St. Paul's Church-Yard, Mr. Round in Exchange Ally, and Mrs. Baldwin in Warwick-Lane

ADVERTISEMENTS.

For the Entertainment of ſeveral Foreign Miniſters.

At Stationer's-Hall near Ludgate, on Wedneſday the 11th of April, will be an extraordinary Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick, by the beſt Performers: Particularly ſeveral ſelect Entertainments out of the following Engliſh Operas, (viz.) The Fairy Queen; King Arthur; Indian Queen; Dioclesian; with the Maſque in Timon of Athens: All compoſ'd by that great Maſter the late Mr. Henry Purcel. For the Benefit of Mr. Cuthbert and Mr. Smith. Tickets may be had at Will's Coffee-houſe in Cornhill at the Rainbow Coffee-houſe in Fleetſtreet, at the Tilt yard Coffee-houſe at Whitehall, and at Stationer's Hall, at 5 s. per Ticket.

This Day is Publiſh'd,

A Poem to the Right Honourable Mr. Harley, wounded by Guiſcard. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over-againſt Catherine ſtreet in the Strand.

The Grecian Hiſtory Vol. I. Containing the ſpace of 1684. Years. By Temple Stanyan, adorn'd with Cuts. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over againſt Catherine-ſtreet in the Strand.

Juſt Publiſhed, and Printed very Correctly, with a neat Elzever Letter, in 12mo. for the Pocket,

Paradiſe Loſt, a Poem in twelve Books, written by Mr. John Milton. The Ninth Edition adorn'd with Sculptures. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over againſt Catherine Street in the Strand.

On Thurſday next will be publiſhed,

Mr. Oznam's Compleat Treatiſe of Fortification, in 6 Parts, 1ſt Regular Fortification. 2d. Conſtruction of Outworks 3d Different Methods of Fortifying, as by de Ville, Errard, Pagan, Vaubon, Cohorne, and ſeveral Nations. 4th Irregular Fortifications. 5th Fortification Offenſive; and 6th Defenſive. With near 60 curious Copper Plates explaining every particular Part; more plain and eaſie than any extant. Done into Engliſh by Mr. Deſaguliers of Hart-Hall in Oxon, with an Appendix concerning that manner of Fortifying, which is truly Mr. Vauban's. Never before in Engliſh, in large 8vo. Sold by M. Hawkins at the Angel in St. Paul's Church Yard, and J. Morphew near Stationer's-Hall. Note, Mr. Oznam's whole Courſe of the Mathematicks will be publiſhed in 2 Months, in 5 Vols, in 8vo. The 1ſt contains an Introduction to the Mathematicks, Euclids Elements with large Notes and Demonſtrations, and his Algebra. The 2d Vol. Arithmetick, Tigronomotry, &c. The 3d Geometry, &c. in every part. 4th Mechanicks (to which is added by way of Notes whatever is in Dr. Wallis) and Perſpective. The 5th Vol. Geography, Dialing, &c. With ſeveral Hundred Copper Cuts, and the moſt correct and uſeful Tables yet Extant. The Price of the whole is 30 s. bound; but to thoſe that Subſcribe now, with Advantage of the 7th Book, comes to 24 s. bound. Subſcriptions are taken in at moſt Bookſellers in London and Country, and Subſcribers Names Printed if return'd in time.

At the Mitre in St. James's-Market (March the 1ſt. 1710.) was an Office open'd for Aſſuring on Lives by Claims, and alſo by Monthly and Quarterly Dividends. Note, The Treaſurer of this Society, who is a Perſon of known Worth and Credit, hath given 3000 l. Security for the juſt Payment of all Summs of Money, as they ſhall become due in the ſaid Office, either by Claims or Dividends. Attendance is given at the Office from 8 in the Morning till 12, and from 2 to 6 at Night (Holydays excepted) where Propoſals at large may be had Gratis.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.